

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

11 January 1957

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 4-57

Subject: The Present Situation in Turkey*

1. There has been no substantial change in the Turkish situation or outlook since publication of NIE 33-56, "Turkey as an Ally," on 21 February 1956, and we foresee no need for early revision of that estimate. The following summary of intervening developments, however, may be of some value in connection with the forthcoming revision of the NSC policy paper on Turkey.

2. Internal Political Situation. During the past year Prime Minister Adnan Menderes has largely succeeded in reestablishing his predominant political leadership of the Democrat Party and the Turkish Parliament, which he appeared in danger of losing during the latter months of 1955. In so doing Menderes has resorted to increased use of repressive measures against the opposition, including seeking to gag opposition political leaders, the press and university professors. The opposition parties have so far failed to unite against the Democrats, whose political strength, particularly in rural areas, appears undiminished. At the same time, Menderes has pushed ahead vigorously with the government's "urbanization program," designed to win support among the city masses through slum clearance and other public works projects. The program has not, as yet, had its full impact and its effects may be blunted by the effect of continuing inflation on the standard of living of wage earners and poorer people in the cities. Menderes remains firmly in control and has managed to bring back to public life the group of political associates, including former Deputy Prime Minister Zorlu, who were involved in political scandals last year. There are, however, economic, social, and political factors in the Turkish situation which could contribute to another intra-party rebellion against his leadership, particularly if the government does not succeed in overcoming its economic and financial difficulties.

* This memorandum has been discussed in substance with Turkish experts in OCI and OIR.

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3. Economic Outlook. The Turkish economic outlook remains clouded. While the government adopted certain half-measures, including a multiple exchange rate, it did not follow through vigorously on its announced economic stabilization program. Turkey's cereal crops have been poor for the last three years. Because of continuing serious drought conditions, only half the normal acreage in winter wheat has been planted, and much of it will probably be a failure. As a result, Turkey will probably have to import nearly one million tons of emergency wheat between July 1957 and July 1958 over and above the 600,000 tons already being shipped from the US. While Turkey has suffered some fuel shortages because of the Suez and pipeline closures, in this respect it is no worse off than other European countries, and the government has been able to blame forces outside its control for this particular situation. There has been little change in the pattern of Turkish-Soviet Bloc economic relations. The Turks have continued to resist Bloc offers of aid, and although there has been some increase in private trade and acceptance of credits, primarily by firms doing business with the European satellites, we continue to believe that the Turks will avoid entangling economic alliances with the Bloc. At the same time, the Turks will probably attempt to capitalize on President Eisenhower's new approach to Middle Eastern security problems by seeking increased US economic and military aid and support.

4. Military Affairs. Already convinced that the US was morally committed to providing a higher level of military aid than they have currently been receiving, the Turks have shown increased interest in US military cooperation and support since the emergence of the Suez crisis and almost certainly believe that they have strong claims to such support under the new proposals outlined by the President to Congress. Under these circumstances, we are all the more convinced that any US efforts to reduce military aid to Turkey and its Baghdad Pact allies below present levels would have a profoundly disillusioning effect in Turkey.

5. Foreign Policy. Regardless of internal developments, there are no signs of a change in Turkey's basic foreign policy. Turkish cooperation with the West, including the UK, has continued


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during the Suez crisis. Turkish hopes for greater US support for the Baghdad Pact are still strong. Turkey has given forthright endorsement to the Administration's new security plans for the Middle East. Should the new US proposals not bring results which are up to their expectations, greater Turkish pressures on the US to become a member of the Baghdad Pact and to participate more actively in area affairs will almost certainly occur. Our belief that the Turks might in time display a less intransigent attitude toward Cyprus appear to remain valid. Turkish statements favoring the Radcliffe plan as a "basis for discussions" and indications that Turkey might accept an ultimate partition of the island between itself and Greece may mark the beginning of a major shift in Turkey's heretofore rigid policy on the Cyprus question.

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